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Jewish Nationalism

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Gathered together here, we are individuals from the most diverse countries; from Russia and Poland, from Romania and Austria, from France and doubtless from other countries. Nevertheless, we don't form a heterogeneous assembly; surrounding us is an atmosphere in which, whatever our country of origin, we move with equal ease.

What is the tie that unites us and thanks to which our meeting is homogeneous?

It is our quality as Jews. From whatever city we come, far or near, whatever the social conditions under which we have been or are subject to, we feel ourselves to be brothers because we are Jews. It isn't enough to state this fact; its meaning must be understood.

When I affirm that I am a Jew in the same way as any other man living in Odessa, Prague, Bucharest, Pozen, or Warsaw, do I mean to say that I have the same faith, the same dogmatic or metaphysical beliefs as those man to whom I feel close? In a word, is it a religious tie that unites us? In calling ourselves Jews do we mean to say that we have an identical concept of the divinity, and not only of that divinity, but of the cult that should be rendered him and even the necessity of that cult? Not in the least. There are

among us practicing Israelites, liberal or orthodox, doubtless some deists, pantheists in the manner of Philo or Spinoza, perhaps positivists and materialists, and certainly some atheists. To be a Jew thus does not mean to have the same religion. I know full well that the contrary is commonly affirmed, and there are those who do not consider as being part of Israel those who do not frequent synagogues. It is especially in those countries where Jews find consolation for the contempt in which they are held despite the fact that their emancipation has been consecrated, it is especially in these countries that Judaism is only seen as a religious confession. This could be a tactic, a policy – that of the ostrich – but it is not an expression of the truth! In this particular case – it is doubtless permitted me to say this here – it is the anti-Semites who are right. They don't know why, to be sure, and it is simply their hatred that has granted them a confused clear-sightedness, but they are in the right against those newspapers that defend orthodoxy. Judaism includes a religion, a national religion, but it is not only a religion, and what can an orthodox, a Hassid, a Talmudist or one of those who repudiates the name of Jew and only retains that of Israelite say in response to an atheist who says to them: "I feel I am a Jew." This is a sentiment that has its value; at the very least, it exists and it would be right to ask where it comes from, on what basis it maintains itself with, and what are its causes and genesis.

An answer to these questions is given both by the philo- and the anti-Semites. What unites all the Jews of the world is that they are of the same race. This statement does not stand up to examination. The Russian Jew with his pushed-in nose, his prominent cheeks, his slanted eyes; the Spanish Jew with his curved nose, his sensuous mouth; the little brown-haired straight-nosed Jew and the red-haired Jew of Germany, do they have the same ancestor, do they descend from the same couple? No, but their forefathers can be found in ancient Judea, and we find their effigy both on the bas-reliefs of the Hittites and the frescoes that adorn the tombs of the pharaohs. There are several Jewish types, but despite the crossings

given a God to men by always being the soldiers of justice and human fraternity.

preserved their faith three times chant the sacred wish: "L'shanah haba'ah b'yerushalayim." I imagine that for those still groaning in ghettos, like for their ancestors in the Middle Ages, these words mean: "Next year we will be in a land of freedom; we will be men and we will be allowed to live in broad sunlight that belongs to all, except us."

Western Jews have lost the meaning of these words, but they will discover them sooner than they think when the countries in which they live will have become for them like the ancient land of Mizraim. They should know that from this day forth they should not expect help from heaven, or the assistance of powerful allies. The Jews will only find their salvation in themselves. It is through their own might that they will liberate themselves; that they will re-conquer that dignity that they have been made to lose. The contemptible and vile portion, without convictions or any other motives than their personal interests, will convert. It won't have any scruples to overcome in order to do this. What will believers and non-believers do who will never resign themselves to the recantation? They will even more strongly feel that they will be free as individuals when the collectivity to which they belong is free, when that nation without a territory that is the Jewish nation will have a land and can dispose of itself without any constraints.

These are your cherished ideas, all of you who have done me the honor of calling me among you; your cherished ideas and your cherished ideal. You are right; you are growing, you are expanding your spirits and your hearts. You want to be yourselves: is there anything higher and more legitimate? And you have this working for you as well, and it's that you are conscious of not working for yourselves alone. You are not working for today, but are working for the future. It is for this that I was happy to bring you my fellow-feeling and my fraternity. But in conclusion, I still have this to say: never forget that, as Renan said, you are the people who introduced justice to the world; and see to it that you are forgiven for having

and the mixes we can say, against Renan, that the perennial nature of these types is incontestable. If we thus rectify the ideas of the philo- and anti-Semites have of the Jewish race, we can say that the identity of origins already constitutes a tie among the Jews.

But the belief in this community of origins does not suffice to unite us. Is it only the qualities that are attributed to us that tie us to each other? No, because we are accorded this quality because of these ties.

Where then do we find the source for this sense of our unity, if I may call it thus? In the first place, in a common past, and recent past. The emancipated Jew conducts himself most often like a parvenu; he forgets the miserable forefathers from whom he is issued. While everyone works at finding his ancestors, he wants to forget that he has any. This ancestor does him little honor; he was generally a poor wretch who was treated like a dog, whose right to life was barely recognized and who slogged along quietly, sordidly with a far from aesthetic humility. And yet if this emancipated Jew closely examined his conscience he would recognize that the humanity of his forefather has, in him, become platitude, his resignation cowardice, though the excuse that the little Jew of the past had no longer exists today. Among those I am speaking of, among the Jews of the west, there are those who have attempted to forget this centuries-old past in order to assimilate themselves into the nations where they live. Have they managed to erase from their spirits and hearts what seventeen centuries imprinted there? What is a hundred years? Are they enough to wipe out the work of several millennia? For in speaking of seventeen centuries I am leaving out the thousands of years during which the Jewish people were formed, and which the rage of Rome and Christianity's hatred spread throughout the earth, like a rebel seed. If at least during these hundred years animosity and contempt had disappeared.

And if despite it all they want to forget, don't they have a living testimony of this past when they see the present condition of Romanian and Russian Jews, of the Jews of Persia and Morocco?

I remember a day when the whole of this tragic past appeared before me. It was in Amsterdam. I was wandering through the streets of the ghetto, following the shade of the divine Spinoza, and I had gone to sit in the old Portuguese synagogue in order to better evoke the image of he who the synagogue pursued. I had remained seated on the bench for a long time, before the sanctuary whose wood – the legend says – comes from Palestine, facing the marble plaque upon which are inscribed the names of the Espinozas. When I left I saw in the courtyard of the synagogue an encampment of Russian Jews, and I thought I had been thrown back into the past ages, where troops of fugitive Jews traveled the roads in order to escape spoliation, martyrdom, and the stake. All the centuries of poverty, despair, resignation and heroic obstinacy lived again, and it was the legendary Ahasuerus, the eternal and miserable vagabond that I thought I saw pass. It is certainly not contemporary anti-Semitism that will erase all this from our memories. And this then is yet another enduring tie between us: a common history.

What is this history made up of? It is made up of common traditions and customs, traditions and customs that have not all equally persisted, for many of them were religious customs and traditions. Nevertheless, they have left their traces in us; they have given us habits and, even more, a similar attitude thanks to which, despite the necessary individual divergences that separate us and must separate us, we look upon things from the same angle. Aside from these traditions and customs, a literature and a philosophy have been elaborated. We were exclusively nourished by this philosophy and literature for many long years. To be sure, we currently live – and in the past many Jews lived – on a fund of general ideas; human and universal ideas that our own people, incidentally, contributed to the creation of. But we possess certain categories of ideas and certain possibilities of sensations and emotions that only belong to us, precisely because they are born of that history, of those traditions, of those customs, of that literature, and of that philosophy.

groups of individuals. They render beauty differently, they have an artistic vision that isn't the same, nor is the matter they have at their disposal; they make the common matter harmonic in different ways. Human richness is made up of these varieties, and so each human group is necessary, is useful to humanity; it contributes in adding beauty to the world, it is a source of forms, thoughts, and images. Why would we regiment humanity, why would we make it bend under one sole rule, by what virtue should we impose a canon on it from which it cannot stray?

In any case, are most socialists, even the internationalist, totally consistent? Do they act in conformity with their doctrines? Are they not demanding – and rightly – autonomy for the Cubans, Cretans, and Armenians? Don't they recognize that all have the right to fight for their freedom, and don't they join together this freedom with the demand for a nationality?

Can someone tell me in what way the Jews are different? Is it because they have been deprived of their own land for such a long time? Because a Sepulcher has replaced the Temple? Because their servitude has lasted for such a long period of time? What does it matter, since they have persisted? Is the accumulation of misfortunes, tortures and contempt a lesser title to sympathy? Oh, I know all this, about the poor Jew who they strike and massacre, who they oppress. These wretches must expiate the crime committed by those – the Romans – who, in crucifying a man created a God. And this people who, unfortunately for them, gave birth to a divinity, must be treated like a people of deicides.

And yet at long last the time should have arrived when the vagabond can find an asylum, rest his heavy head and stretch his weary legs. How many centuries have passed since the day when old Ezekiel, imploring his God, said to him: "Have pity on wandering Oholibah," that fornicating Oholibah that was Jerusalem in his anger of a prophet. Like in those far-off times the Jews still wander the earth's roads: how much longer will they wander in this way? Every year on the evening of Passover those among them who have

I see nothing here that is contrary to socialist orthodoxy and I, who am orthodox in nothing, find no difficulty in admitting nationalism alongside internationalism. On the contrary, I find that in order to establish internationalism it is necessary in the first place for human groups to conquer their autonomy. They must be able to freely express themselves; they must be conscious of who they are.

I know full well that I will be reproached for another thing. It will be said to me that at a moment when everything is being unified you want to divide. We must understand each other on this. What do we mean when we speak of unification or human homogeneity? We mean that on one hand, thanks to economic causes that permit easier penetration, and on the other thanks to intellectual causes, the differences that once separated peoples have become less marked. The same degree of culture is being established, because the same social state is manifesting itself, though this is be restricted to a few western nations and the New World. We also mean that the domain of common ideas is growing every day; that a communion is being established beyond all frontiers between individuals who possess this maximum of knowledge, which places intelligences on the same plane. And the number of these individuals increases every day. This is a statement of fact; as a consequence of this, must we draw from it a kind of dogma that insists that we do everything to render men uniform? I don't see the use of this. Nothing seems more necessary to humanity than variety. Those who say the contrary are committing a grave error or, more accurately, they forget something of great importance; for them humanity is an anthropological expression, a political expression or an economic expression. But it must be something else: it must be an aesthetic expression. In order to prevent it from ceasing to be such we must above all maintain this variety. Men have at their disposition a certain number of general ideas that belong to the treasury of the species. But each individual has a particular way of expressing these general ideas and concepts. It is the same for

How, then, do we translate this fact of a certain number of individuals having a common past, traditions and ideas? We translate it by saying that they belong to the same group, that they have the same nationality. And this is what makes comprehensible that incontestable Jewish fraternity that many seek to explain by humanitarian sentiments. A poor explanation, because these sentiments particularize and those who want to repudiate their quality as Jews forget them. Such is the justification of the tie that unites the Jews of the five parts of the world:

There is a Jewish nation.

This is not the first time I have put forth this opinion. I developed it three years ago in a book for which I was subject to many attacks. It was said to me that by affirming the permanence and the reality of a Jewish nation I was making myself the auxiliary of the anti-Semites. I thought much about this serious complaint and on this point I persist in remaining the ally of the anti-Semites, as was said at the time. I am their adversary on so many others that I can allow myself to support with precise reasoning their confused affirmations. What shocks me on the part of anti-Semites is not hearing them say: "You are a Nations," nor hearing them affirm that we are a state within the state. I find that there are not enough states within the state, or, to be more precise, in modern states there are not enough autonomous and free groupings with ties among themselves. The human ideal does not appear to me to be political or intellectual unification. One unification alone seems to me to be necessary: moral unification. What shocks me, for it is contrary to truth, is the displaying of the Jews as a nation especially hateful, corrupt and wicked. What shocks me, because it is against justice, is, with a suspicious goal, the holding of Jews responsible for all of society's ills.

As for the fact that there is a Jewish nationality, if it were it only be remarked upon by the anti-Semites and rejected by those among the Jews , some of whom willingly imagine that they were once at the side of Arminius in the Teutoborg forest and others that they

were with Vercingitorix at Alesia, this would still not for me be a reason to deny it, since the evidence imposes it. If I look before me I see, I repeat, a few million human beings who for many centuries submitted to the same external and internal laws, who lived under the same codes, had the same ideas, the same mores. I note that these thousands of individuals still give themselves the same name, that they still feel themselves united and that they are conscious of belonging to the same group. What then should I reasonably conclude? That these thousands of individuals form a nation. It will be said to me that many of them have melted in, have assimilated. What does this mean? Are there not, for example, Germans of French origin and Frenchmen of German origin? Does this prevent there from being a German nation and a French nation? Of course not, not any more than it prevents critics from establishing what such and such a German author owes to his French ancestors, or such and such a French author to his German ancestors. The truth is that among the Jews who deny the existence of a Jewish nation there are many who are pushed to this by the fear of consequences. With a few rare exceptions, among them it is not an opinion or a conviction, it is diplomacy. And strangely, it is among them that we find the Jewish chauvinist, he who says: " Now there is something you don't find among the Jews." Or; "There's something that can't be found among the Jews." I reality, we find among the Jews the same amount of virtues and vices and infamies as among any other people. Is this not natural?

If we now examine that Jewish nation we see that it too is divided in classes. I am not speaking of the Jewish nobility, it comes from the Holy Empire, but there is a financial, industrial, and commercial *grande bourgeoisie* , an intellectual and smuggler petite bourgeoisie, and an immense Jewish proletariat. In the same way there are Jewish conservatives, Jews of the *juste milieu*, and socialist and revolutionary Jews. Here in the west we don't clearly observe these divisions among the Jews, but we can see them everywhere there are Jewish agglomerations constituted in communities. Thus in Gali-

What then does internationalism suppose? It means establishing ties between nations, not of diplomatic friendship, but of human fraternity. To be an internationalist means abolishing the current economic-political constitution of nations, for this constitution only exists for the defending of the private interests of peoples, or rather of their rulers, at the expense of neighboring peoples. Suppressing frontiers does not mean making an amalgamation of all the inhabitants of the globe. Is not one of the familiar concepts of internationalism socialism, and even of revolutionary anarchism, the federative concept, the concept of a fragmented humanity composed of a multitude of cellular organisms? It's true that ideally this theory says that those cells that will group together will group together by virtue of affinities not caused by any ethnological, religious, or national tradition. But this is of little importance, since it does admit of groups. In any event, we are here only concerned with the present, and the present commands us to seek the most appropriate means of assuring the liberty of man. Currently it is by virtue of traditional principles that men want to league together. For this they invoke identity of origin, their common past, similar ways of envisaging phenomena, beings, and things; a common history, a common philosophy. It is necessary to permit them to come together.

Another objection. By favoring the development of nationalism, certain socialists say, you contribute to the union of classes in such a way that the workers forget the economic struggle by joining together with their enemies. Is this not the case? This union is generally only temporary and, something worth noting, most often it is not the owning class that imposes it on the poor and workers, it is these latter who oblige the rich to march along with them. In any event, is it not necessary for the wretched mass of Jewish workers that, before being able to escape their proletarian poverty, they possess their liberty, i.e., the possibility to fight and win. The problem will be well and truly posed the day, for example, when access to several countries will be refused to those Jews who leave Russia.

in not surrendering, what will be the sole condition of their individual liberty? It will be the conquest of the collective freedom that they lost, i.e., the rebirth of their nationality. This constraint also prevents them from giving all they have, a part of their strength having been spent on this resistance, in this struggle that permits them only to keep their potential for development without this development being able to be effectuated. It is yet again the reconstituting of their nationality that will give them the faculty to flourish.

Is this not currently the case for those Russian or Romanian Jews I'm speaking of? Given the state in which they are kept, can they give an idea of what they are capable of producing? Will it not be the same tomorrow for western Jews when they will be forced to employ their energy in the combat against anti-Semitism, an eternal, a perpetual combat made up of victories and disasters capable of wearing out the minority that supports it?

What does the word "nationalism" mean for a Jew, or rather, what should it mean? It should mean freedom. The Jew who today says: "I am a nationalist" is not saying in a special, precise and clear way that I am a man who wants to reconstitute a Jewish state in Palestine and dreams of re-conquering Jerusalem. He is saying: "I want to be a completely free man, I want to enjoy the sun; I want to have the right to my dignity as a man. I want to escape oppression, escape insults, escape the contempt that they want to bring to bear on me." At certain moment in history, nationalism is for human groups the manifestation of the spirit of freedom.

Am I then in contradiction with internationalist ideas? Not in the least. How do I make them agree? Simply by not giving words a value and a meaning they don't have. When socialists combat nationalism they are in reality combating protectionism and national exclusivism. They are combating that patriotic, narrow, and absurd chauvinism that leads people to place themselves one against the other as rivals or adversaries, and who grant each other neither grace nor mercy. This is the egoism of nations; an egoism as odious as that of individuals, and every bit as contemptible.

cia where, following the development of the individualism of the Jewish bourgeoisie, a part of the middle class of brokers and shop owners was cast into the ranks of the proletariat, a proletariat that this same bourgeoisie maintains in an incredible state of poverty and enfeeblement. Alongside them has been constituted a class of Jews without any form of work, whose numbers grow daily. Is it not the same in Russia? Don't we see there the Jewish bourgeois of high commerce, of industry and finance enjoying a privileged situation while all the laws of exception, the persecutions and the massacres fall upon the workers, artisans, and the unemployed? If we pass now to London, among that colony of Jewish refugees from Russia and Poland, don't we also find there clearly defined classes? When the sweating system was still in place – and it still is, though in lesser proportions – was it not the case that the sweat shop owners, the bosses who most brutally exploited the workers of the East End, were Jews? It is no different in the United States, where two hundred thousand Jews rot in New York in indescribable poverty, or in Algeria, or in Romania, where Jews suffer under a regime you are aware of, a regime that excludes any form of liberty. Everywhere Jews are divided into an owning bourgeois minority and a proletarian majority.

But I don't here have to develop this point of view. I think that I have sufficiently established what I had to establish, i.e., that the Jews constitute a nation. In any event, it is because they are a nation that anti-Semitism exists. Without any doubt, and we cannot insist on this enough, religious prejudice is the basis of the hatred of Israel, but at the same time this religious prejudice implies the existence of this Jewish people upon which the anathemas of the Church have fallen for 1900 years. Suppose that Christianity did not exist and the diaspora had occurred: the Jews, a nation without a territory, a people scattered among the peoples would even so have provoked anti-Judaism. It would doubtless have been less violent, even though this is not certain, for Judaism would have just as well entered into conflict with other religious principles, as

occurred in Alexandria and Rome. There just would have been the subtraction of deicide, and that is all.

I have just said that the cause of anti-Semitism was the existence of the Jews as a nationality. What then are the effects of anti-Semitism? It is to render that nationality more tangible to the Jews; it's to make even stronger their consciousness that they are a people.

A bare thirty years ago what was the situation of the Jews of the globe? They were divided into emancipated Jews and Jews living under laws of exception. A great number of Jews placed under the regime of persecution had as their ideal the condition of emancipated Jews, and the major part of emancipated Jews tended to de-Judaize themselves, to detach themselves from the Jewish masses still in bondage and with which they pretended to have no more attachments than those commanded by humanity.

We are no longer at the same point. A hundred years ago in France, and less still in Germany, in Austria and England, the Jews of the west were liberated. The material barriers that separated them from Christian society were destroyed; they have been permitted to exercise their rights as men. There was a golden age for the Jews, an era when all dreams took wing; all dreams, all ambitions, all appetites. What has happened? A small portion, the possessing portion of the Jews, has launched an attack on the pleasures from which they were cut off for so many centuries. It has rotted in contact with the Christian world, which has exercised on it the same dissolving action that the civilized exercise on the savages to whom they bring alcoholism, syphilis, and tuberculosis. And so it is evident that the so-called superior class of western Jews, and principally the Jews of France, is in a state of advanced decomposition. It is no longer Jewish, but it is not Christian, and it is incapable of substituting a philosophy, and even less a free morality, a credo that it no longer has. While the Christian bourgeoisie keeps itself upright thanks to the corset of its dogmas, its traditions, of its morality and its conventional principles, the Jewish bourgeoisie,

ing the reaction of the collectivity on the individuals that compose it, thanks to these affinities, thanks to the favorable milieu that they have allowed it to establish, they then acquire a personality, and serve to increase the characteristics of the group of which they are a part. Small or great, these groupings are nations.

What do we call a free nation? This is what we call a nation that can develop materially, intellectually, and morally without any outside barrier being placed before its development. If as a result of conquest or in some other fashion another nation has become dependent upon it, all that will be left of that second nation will be a number of denationalized individuals, that is, individuals no longer able to express their special form of collective spirit, i.e., having lost their collective liberty.

What happens to these individuals themselves? They are the vanquished, the conquered, and are consequently placed in a state of inferiority, and if they don't accept their disappearance they lose their freedom. It can be asked: Why don't they disappear? Why do they remain attached to those ancient forms that they represented at a given moment of their existence? These are pointless questions. At the very most we can say in response that only those human groups that are still amorphous, having only imprecise characteristics and a vague consciousness of themselves are susceptible to allowing themselves to be absorbed.

Groups that are strongly constituted and homogenized, having definite characteristics and a clear consciousness of themselves, necessarily resist. It is the same with collectivities as it is with men: the weak surrender and the strong persist. Whatever the case, we are in the presence of a historic fact: the maintenance and survival in the midst of nations of certain individuals belonging to different nationalities, that is, having preserved forms of being different from the forms of those around them. These individuals, from the sole fact that they have resisted, suffer a constraint, since peoples have a tendency to reduce the heterogeneous elements that exist among them. Their freedom is thus diminished, and if they persist

constituted, to form themselves. Why wouldn't Jews form one? I see nothing that opposes this, and it is in the development of Jewish nationalism that I see the solution to the Jewish Question.

It can be said: If this is your conviction then why have you fought anti-Semitism here; why have you begun a combat that you know you can't emerge victorious from? I have fought and will continue to fight anti-Semitism because I consider it the duty of any human being to defend himself when he is attacked. An individual who renounces resistance and who doesn't know how to use the arms he has at his disposal abdicates his personality, consents to slavery and consequently deserves to disappear. It is a good thing to combat anti-Semitism, if only for the right to enjoy the benefits of armed peace and in keeping with the principle that the rights of a belligerent are recognized more than those of a serf who submits. The Jew who doesn't rise up in the face of anti-Semitism sinks down a degree into moral abjection.

This said, I must examine what advantage will accrue to the Jews by their constitution as a nation, and finally how the nationalism I have just spelled out can accord with the socialist ideas that were, are, and will remain my ideas. As for the means by which we will definitively create this Jewish nation, I don't have to concern myself with them for the moment.

How should we consider nationalism? For me it is the expression of collective freedom and the condition for individual freedom. I call nation the milieu in which the individual can develop and flourish most perfectly. Let us now justify these definitions.

If there is one thing that is undeniable it is that there exist special affinities between certain individuals. Whatever the reasons and causes that have given birth to these affinities, they exist. When and how are they born? In order to determine this we must plunge into the darkest depths of history, and we only note it when the beings endowed with them have constituted themselves into groups. From that day these affinities reinforce themselves and become clearer, and thanks to them the personality of the group is created. Follow-

deprived of its secular stays, poisons the Jewish nation with its rot. It will poison the other nations as long as it has not decided – and this is something we cannot encourage it strongly enough to do – to adhere to Christianity of the ruling classes and to leave Judaism behind.

While that category dreamed of acquiring fortune, dignities, honors, decorations, and positions, while the Jewish petit-bourgeoisie developed itself intellectually, the re-edification of the ancient ghettoes was being worked on. In keeping with the economic and political circumstances, anti-Semitism was born, but these circumstances were only, it must be stressed, the efficient causes, proper for reawakening ancient prejudices. To what did anti-Semitism tend? To the restoration of the ancient legislation against Israel. But this goal it had assigned itself was an ideal. What real and practical goal did it attain? It did not arrive, and in France, Austria and Germany it will doubtless never arrive, at rebuilding distinct neighborhoods, nor at enclosing Jews in a special territory like in Russia. But thanks to it, they have more or less reconstituted a moral ghetto. Israelites are no longer cloistered in the west; chains are no longer stretched across the ends of the streets on which they live, but around them is created a hostile atmosphere, an atmosphere of mistrust, or latent hatred, of unspoken and, for this reason, all the more powerful prejudices, a ghetto more terrible than that from which we could escape through revolt or exile. Even when this animosity is hidden the intelligent Jew perceives it, he feels a resistance, he senses a wall between himself and those in whose midst he lives.

At the current time, what can we show the Jew of Eastern Europe who so desires to conquer the situation of his western brothers? We can show him the Jew as pariah. Isn't this a lovely goal to seek to attain? And what can we say to him if he simply says this: "My situation is abominable; I have obligations and no rights. They have reduced me to unimaginable poverty and degradation. What remedy do you propose? Emancipation? What will your emancipation give

me? It will place me in social conditions that will allow me to refine myself, and thanks to it I will acquire new capacities for feeling and, consequently, greater suffering. It will develop in me a greater sensibility and at the same time it will not make the things that wound that susceptibility disappear; to the contrary. From a wretch who has been occasionally rendered numb by his poverty it will make a subtle being who will doubly feel all his stings, and whose existence will then become a thousand times more unbearable. Of an often unconscious pariah it will make a conscious pariah. What advantages will I obtain from this change in condition? None. As a result, I don't care at all about your "emancipation": it is neither a guarantee, nor an assurance, nor an amelioration.

In order to reply to this argument you need a nationalist, but if a Jew from Russia spoke in this way to a French Jew I don't see what the latter could say in response. He doubtless wouldn't even call on him to seek together the means to fight anti-Semitism, for he doesn't think to do this in any way, shape, or form. In general he bends, receives the blows and thinks of the future age when he will be allowed to cut a better figure in the world. In this alone he is Christian; when he is slapped on the right cheek he offers the left, and even his neck.

Let us leave aside if you will the Jews of France. They are the best agents of anti-Semitism. Instead of reacting against their enemies, which would raise their personal dignity and accentuate their intellectual and moral personality, they strive – with certain rare exceptions – to develop their passive acceptance of evil and their cowardice. They advocate the politics of silence and expect time to do its work. The example of the Jews of Austria seems to them to be a good one to follow, and they follow in their steps. Let us leave them aside until we can set them in motion. They are an infinitesimal minority: what are 100,000 Jews when more than 6,000,000 suffer in the world. 100,000 would be an incalculable force if they were an elite, but they are trash, aside from a small group of the petite bourgeoisie, which has not yet become conscious of the new situation in which it is living due to the existence of anti-Semitism and its development. But we must look further. Today the Jewish Question is posed more acutely than ever. A solution is being sought on all sides. In reality it is no longer a question of knowing whether or not anti-Semitism should or should not win seats in parliament. It's a matter of knowing what is to be the destiny of millions of Jews scattered around the four corners of the globe. This is the true problem.

As long as Christianity exists, the Jews, spread about among the peoples of the world, will cause hatred and anger, and the condition in which they will be placed will be both materially and morally inferior. If they can't enjoy their rights as citizens or men, or if they are the butt of a certain form of contempt, the result is the same. What is the solution to this? The obliteration of Christianity? This, unfortunately, is a far off ideal, and in the meantime what is to be done? I know full well that the Christian peoples have the option of the Armenian solution, but their sensitivity would not allow them to envisage this. And what is more, it is not possible for us a Jews to accept conditions of existence incompatible with our dignity as men. We have the right to develop ourselves in every way; it is necessary that this right be effectively guaranteed to us. Since I leave aside the great majority of emancipated Jews, who doubtless feel themselves in an acceptable condition – for which I don't praise them – we must know what remedy we will bring to the millions of non-emancipated Jews. I don't think that it would be legitimate to count on an economic and social transformation. In the first place this transformation, which I hope for, and whose coming I will assist in fighting for with all my might, sadly seems to still be far off. And then it is not proven to me that it will bring Jews better conditions. I believe that one day humanity will be a confederation of free groupings and not organized in keeping with the capitalist system; free groupings in which the distribution of wealth and the relations of labor and capital will be completely different from those of today. These groups must be allowed to be